








PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, March 15, 2005 • 36 pages | vol. 20 / no. 97


## DOH 'insider' comes out to assail 'Ligtas Buntis'

By Christian V. Esguerra

## Public schools tap PE tutors for core subjects

By Alcuin Papa




## Peso breaks into 53 level vs dollar

By Doris Dumlao

# Abu inmates seize prison

## 3 guards, 2 bandits killed

By Jocelyn R. Uy, Luige A. del Puerto and Norman Bordadora



A JAIL guard, who was shot and wounded by Abu Sayyaf inmates, is brought out of Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig for treatment at a hospital.



FIRST day on the job and already with his hands full, the newly appointed PNP chief, Deputy Director General Arturo Lomibao, arrives at Camp Bagong Diwa.

## Officials knew of plot as early as December

By Armand N. Nocum and Norman Bordadora

## Guests miss new PNP chief during turnover ceremony

By Luige A. del Puerto






POLICEMEN take battle positions outside the maximum security detention center in Camp Bagong Diwa after armed Abu Sayyaf bandits attempted to escape.

## Pesticide, not cyanide, killed 27 pupils in Bohol, DOH rules

By Christian V. Esguerra and PDI Visayas Bureau

WEATHER FORECAST

# Second FRONT PAGE

# RP, China, Vietnam sign joint accord on Spratlys

### Security fears allayed

### Commercial transaction

### Costs to be determined

# Senators doubt VAT bill's okay before recess




# Edsa bomb suspect enters guilty plea

# Pagasa explains limits to its forecasting skills



# Military blames NPA for killings at Luisita

# Filipino Muslims plead for Tarongoy

# Peso breaks into 53 level vs dollar




### Still undervalued

### 'Worst is over'

## Public schools tap PE tutors for core subjects

### 10,000 teaching jobs




### Corrections

# Bishop raps Defensor

# Team arrives to help Filipinos return to Malaysia

## The Daily Gospel



# Abu inmates seize prison





### Dilapidated jails

### Gunshots heard

### Daylong standoff

### Abu Sayyaf threat

### Not face to face

### Children at play



# Fire jail warden, senators demand

By TJ Burgonio

### Reyes confirmation

# Officials knew of plot as early as December

### Jail wardens alerted

### Breakout alert

### Phone call intercepted

### No room for laxity

### Buying their story

### Guards too lax

# Plot to kill Chavit aired in Erap trial

# 4 Pinoys beheaded

# The WORLD

# China passes Taiwan antisecession law



A VISITOR stands in front of a wall depicting an engraving of the Chinese Revolution March 14 in Shanghai, China. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Monday said China's newly passed antisecession law authorizing force against Taiwan was not a "war bill."



## Dalai Lama not seeking Tibet independence



DALAI LAMA



POPE John Paul waving to well-wishers as he leaves Rome's Gemelli Hospital March 13, 18 days after he underwent throat surgery to relieve severe breathing problems.



# Pope leaves hospital, looks lively

ROME—Pope John Paul, looking fairly alert and waving to crowds of well-wishers, left hospital on Sunday and returned to the Vatican 18 days after he underwent throat surgery to relieve severe breathing problems.

The 84-year-old Pope left the hospital sitting in the front seat of a grey van just five hours after his departure was announced.

He was wearing his traditional white cassock and blessed the crowds from behind the glass as his motorcade made its way to the Vatican some 4 km away.

"I was very impressed with him because he looks quite lively, he didn't look very sick," said [illegible], a Polish nun who saw the Pope as he returned to the Vatican. "I am very amazed to see him. I'm very, very happy I saw him."

In what appeared to be an attempt to reassure Catholics, a Vatican television camera was set behind the Pope in the van and broadcast live footage of the back of the Pope's head as he waved and blessed people lining the motorcade route.

Earlier on Sunday the Pope reassured Catholics himself by speaking directly to the faithful from his hospital window for the first time since he underwent a tracheotomy on Feb. 24.

But it was still unclear when and how the Pope, whose breathing problems were exacerbated by Parkinson's disease, will resume his ceremonial activities as head of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Vatican has said he will decide himself what role he will play in Holy Week activities which begin on Palm Sunday, March 20, and ends a week later on Easter Sunday.

For the first time in his 26-year-old papacy he has delegated senior cardinals to preside at nearly all Holy Week services—one of the busiest periods of the Church calendar.

He is expected to make brief appearances at some of them and may be linked up to the faithful at others via television. *AP*

# Israel has plans to attack Iran, says London Times

# Ex-Kosovo PM pleads not guilty to war crimes



HARADINAJ

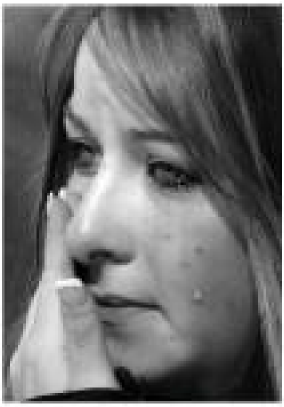








## Jewish settlement inside barrier



GRIEF AFTER US SHOOTING

# One man is accused, but Argentine's 'dirty war' is on trial



# US faces charges at UN rights meet



RICE

## No White House plans, says Rice

TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2366 (Globe) or 383 (Smart)

# From trailer park to $4-M mansion

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
*LA Correspondent*

'I DON'T know what I did in this life to deserve all this'—Hilary Swank, receiving her Oscar for 'Million Dollar Baby'



SHE almost died, literally, while doing 'Baby.'

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—Hilary Swank is the new Cinderella of Hollywood.

Who would ever think that a girl who grew up in a trailer park and, at age 15, lived in a car with her mother when they moved to Los Angeles would one day be a two-time Oscar Best Actress winner?

The brown-haired, brown-eyed actress from Lincoln, Nebraska, has indeed gone a long way from "just having $75 in cash, eating at mini-marts and charging it to our Mobil card." Now she lives in a $4 million four-story house in Greenwich Village, earning several millions of dollars per movie.

"I owe it all to my mother (Judy Swank)," she admits. "She was the one who believed in me from the very beginning. She would endlessly call up people and say, 'you have to meet my daughter, she is really talented and beautiful.' Until, miraculously, I did get myself an agent," the actress recalls with amusement.

Before "Million Dollar Baby," she went from "The Next Karate Kid" to "Boys Don't Cry," pushing herself to the limit with each role, even when it hurt.

For her performance as Maggie Fitzgerald, the rough-hewn country girl who dreamt of becoming a boxing champion in Clint Eastwood's second Oscar Best Picture winner, Hilary buffed up, gaining 19 pounds of muscle and training like a real prizefighter.

"I still have that t-shirt that said, 'I got hit by Lucia Rijker and survived,'" she discloses in reference to the boxing champion that she challenges in the movie.

Yes, she adds, laughing, "I did get occasionally hit and I can tell you that getting hit by Lucia Rijker is an interesting thing. It hurts!"

## Brush with death

Unknown to many, Hilary almost died while doing the movie. She narrates: "I developed a foot blister while doing 'Baby.' Since it hurt so much, I tried to pop it myself, until a rash enveloped the wound. The doctors diagnosed me with a strain of staph bacteria which was deadly."

Hilary trained four to five hours every day, six days a week for three months. It probably helped that she is a former Junior Olympics and Washington State champion swimmer, and also ranked fifth in the same state in all-around gymnastics. "I was asked to gain 10 pounds of muscle and I ended up gaining 19 pounds. That is my job. If I'm supposed to be a boxer, I'm going to do my best to look like a boxer because that's what I need to do," she points out.

To gain all that muscle, Hilary reveals: "I was eating 210 grams of protein a day and that entailed eating every hour and a half. I was downing egg whites. I was drinking flax oil and protein shakes. I was boxing two and a half hours a day and then lifting weights an hour and a half to two hours a day. Since I have been working out so hard, I would be sleeping nine hours a night and that was too long to go without eating. So I had to wake up intermittently to drink protein shakes."

She continues: "At one point, my diet got really strict and I could take in only 50 grams of carbs a day. And just to put that in perspective, an eight-ounce glass of apple juice has 30 grams of carbs in it. I had to do this for five months. But that's what I love about my job because the whole experience afforded me to dive into another person's life, a boxer's life."

## Just like Maggie

Asked whether she has maintained the lifestyle, Hilary admits, "No, I have stopped drinking those egg whites and those protein shakes.

But I am athletic, though. I like to work out. I like to exercise. It's a really integral part of my life just because I grew up an athlete."

When not acting, Hilary loves to go sky diving, river rafting and skiing.

The 30-year-old actress confesses that she easily identified with her character Maggie, who comes from nowhere and becomes someone. She discloses, "Maggie is probably one of the characters that I felt closest to because Maggie grew up in a trailer park and with not a lot. She had this dream and she felt so good boxing. She even has a line in the movie that goes, 'I never felt good doing anything else. If I don't have this, I don't have anything.' I've often felt the same way about acting."

Hilary points out one other "interesting" thing: "Maggie wants Frankie Dunn (Clint's character) to be a part of that experience and I, as an actress, always had the desire to work with Clint Eastwood, a living legend, and to do a major piece of cinema." She pauses, then says yet again, "I am just so thankful for this."

# Boxing as drama



THE COLLABORATORS. Standing from left: Henry Peralta, director; Enrico Santos, ABS-CBN VP for Creative Entertainment and Synergy; Albert Almadro, executive producer; seated from left: Lolito Sanggalang and Bogie Arceo, Jr.

By Joco C. Abola

'Kamao' is not a typical fight-and-win show, since it also intends to tug at viewers' heartstrings



THE 11 "Kamao" contenders

# Travolta, Thurman chill out again

TAKE FIVE



VINCENT and Mia, now Edie and Chili

AP



KC Concepcion

# KC due home to do 'Beauty and the Beast'

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
# OPINION



## What next?

TAX consumers for the use of raw water? Next they will be taxing people for breathing in air. And then tax people for daily physical activities like eating, drinking, etc.

The National Water Resources Board last week was contemplating charging a fee for the use of raw water to raise revenues to fund water resource development and to force consumers to conserve the scarce resource. The board admitted that its proposal is "socially sensitive" and could be very controversial.

**EDITORIALS**

The proposed tax is very socially sensitive because water, next to air, is essential for a person to stay alive. Seventy percent of the human body is composed of water, and one can survive for only three days without water. Make water so costly and you would be practically condemning some very poor people to death.

As it is, water consumers in the cities and other urban areas are already paying for the use of water to water companies. Various taxes and imposts are already included in the final rate charged to consumers. A tax on raw water would again make the water companies raise their rates; they cannot be expected to absorb the new tax themselves.

Under the proposal, even water coming from the ground would be taxed. So artesian wells would be taxed. Deep wells, from which water would be sucked up by electric motors, would be taxed. Conceivably, water scooped from shallow wells dug near water sources like rivers and brooks would also be taxed.

Water for irrigation, which is also raw water, would be taxed. This would raise the prices of rice, which is heavily dependent on water for its cultivation, and other agricultural products.

And what about the rain "that falls from gentle heaven"? Will rain water collected in big catchment basins or small pails be taxed? That is "raw water" too.

As it is, a big sector of the population, particularly those in the rural areas, does not have sources of clean, potable water. This sector depends on ground water and rivers, brooks and lakes for its household water. And yet it is this sector that will bear a big part of the proposed tax.

Right now, people living below the poverty line manage to survive from day to day by eating rice or gruel (which is rice boiled in a lot of water), salt or patis (fish sauce) or toyo (soy sauce). They finish their meal with a glass of water since they are too poor to afford soft drinks whose prices have been raised recently. Very soon, even a glass of drinking water may be a luxury for the poor if the proposed tax on raw water is approved.

## Who's next?

THE KILLINGS of activists and members of leftist organizations all over the country and the slayings of pro-worker people in Hacienda Luisita have reached alarming levels, and yet they do not seem to disturb government officials at all.

Is it perhaps true, as Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo alleged in a recent privilege speech, that the killings, abductions and disappearances of leftists are acts of terrorism, perpetrated by agents of the state? A total of 11 activists were killed and five were abducted in several provinces in the first quarter of this year.

One of the aims of the framers of the present Constitution in providing for party-list representation in the House of Representatives was to encourage leftist organizations to go above ground and wage a parliamentary and not an armed struggle. But, as Ocampo asked in his privilege speech, "Is the present government determined to illegalize Bayan, Anakpawis and the Gabriela Women's Party? Is it the government's policy to make no distinction between the underground revolutionary movement and the aboveground legal democratic mass movement?"

Will some responsible official please answer his question?

As for the killings in the troubled Hacienda Luisita, no one in government seems to be alarmed by them. Are they perhaps turning a blind eye on these killings, hoping that the "troublemakers" or those supporting the strikers, would all be eliminated?

The police are going through the motions of investigating the killings and going after suspects. There may be a need to change the police unit assigned to Hacienda Luisita so that a new group can look at the situation with a fresh eye. Meanwhile, the authorities should consider placing Hacienda Luisita under police control, something similar to Comelec control during elections, to prevent further killings.



## The President's men—or wimps?

**VIEWPOINT**

*Juan L. Mercado*

[illegible]

## Music of the night

**THERE'S THE RUB**

*Conrado de Quiros*

[illegible]

# Legislators focusing on the wrong thing

POLITICAL TIDBITS



*Belinda Olivares-Cunanan*

# Coming soon: Filipino 'contractors' in Iraq

COMMENTARY

# San Pablo de los Montes

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY



# Another lifetime

YOUNG BLOOD

# The return

# Premature insistence

LETTERS



## Perfume ingredients not harmful

## Judge within her authority

## More questions about Edsa I

## Students need VAT increase

## It's still Mapua

## 'Go-go style' in gov't

InqBox




Motoring

# Tests fail to solve mystery of fish kill in Palawan towns

### Algal bloom

### Possible culprits



TUMBLING INDUSTRY

# NDF condemns slay attempt on lawyer Capulong

# Palace now looking into pact violations of Cordillera rebels

### Reason to worry

### Result of merger

# Across the NATION

# US soldiers to return to Basilan

## Antiterror squads in quarrying questioned



ZAMBOANGA SUNSET

The setting sun paints a picture of calm and casts a warm glow at the Zamboanga City port, once the site of military exercises involving American and Filipino soldiers.

## Mayor Vi's aide, friend shot dead in Lipa City

## Board asks CHR to probe firm on workers' eviction

## Execs cleared of graft over reconditioned equipment

## *Lawyer says pact with MNLF a failure*

## Mayor says he's confident murder raps won't prosper

# METRO

# Detained for failing failing to show ITR

## Study on ferry service safety urged



## Displaced folks face 2nd eviction

# BIR gets tough on QC tax evaders, files charges

# Stupid BJMP guards

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



# English skill gives jobseeker an advantage

# Still on top after 20 years

# Pesticide, not cyanide, killed 27 pupils in Bohol, DOH declares

### Cockroaches, lice and fleas

### Lethal dose

### Aggravated

### Antidotes

### Puzzling

# DOH 'insider' comes out to assail 'Ligtas Buntis'

### Sacked or not?

### Contraceptives or faith?

# Guests miss new PNP chief during turnover ...

### Status

### Two-week practice

### Snipers, negotiators

### Capture of Dante

# SPORTS

Editor: Teddyvic S. Melendres

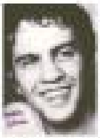


SPECIAL PRAYER: A priest blesses Manny Pacquiao during Sunday Mass in California.

# Ex-world champion gives Pacquiao 50-50 chance

By Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—This will sound absurd in Manila, but three-time former world boxing champ Bobby Chacon says Philippine national treasure Manny Pacquiao has only a 50-50 chance of winning his monumental showdown with Erik Morales in Las Vegas on March 19.



CHACON: Morales is also a good fighter.

# Word war erupts over gloves



MORAD

ROACH

## Manny also shooting for IBA title

# Ex-world champion . . .

## *Word war erupts over gloves*

# Full SEA Games launching rites today

## Leviste tops SEAG qualifier



## *Bigger cast seen in 2nd Epson Cup*

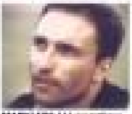
### SPORTSWATCH

## Less playing time for ace Barako guard

# Winds to test 40 select pros

By Musong R. Castillo

# World paralympic champ due



MARCHLEWSKI: 111 marathons

# A poem masquerading as a movie

SPECTATOR

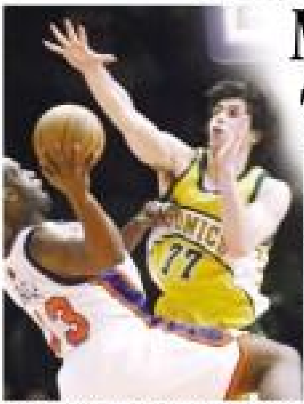
*Al S. Mendoza*



## Big show by Antonio in NCA tilt

# Lions playing in PBL under Nenaco fold

# Mavericks lick Timberwolves



SONICS' Vladimir Radmanovic (77) foils an attempt by Knicks' Malik Rose in the fourth quarter of the game won by the Sonics.

# Cardona joining 2005 PBA draft



# Russian wave rises; Federer wins



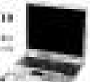
BELGIAN Kim Clijsters stretches to return to Anna Chakvetadze.

# Els triumphs; Padraig scores

# Vindication

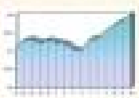
Clean Living





# T-bill rates drop across the board

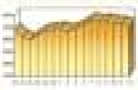
## Currencies



## Stock Market

### Shares end lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX





CRUZ

## Mining sector sees $555M in new investments

## Inquirer Monitor

Figures that matter to our nation's life

### Effects of increasing VAT & removing VAT exemptions (in percent)



# Conspiracy teary


BREAKTIME
Conrado R. Banal

# DOE in full blown bid to turn RP into SE Asia's leading producer of wind power

# BUSINESS

## Limit VAT hike to 3 years, experts urge

By Doris C. Dumlao




## GMA 7 stockholder open to selling stake

# Toll fees, oil prices weigh on quarry trade

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Pampanga Truckers Association appealed to the Manila North Tollways Corp. to provide a 20-percent discount on fees at the North Luzon Expressway, saying the 500-percent increase in toll rates and oil price hikes were starting to kill the province's quarry industry.

Arnold Liwanag, PTA president, said 40 members of his group, which operates more than 300 trucks, had issued notices for a reduction in the delivery of sand to buyers in Metro Manila since last week.

This came as the cost of hauling sand rose 80 to 90 percent, he said in an interview after Thursday's consultation on a proposal reforming the collection system in the province's quarry industry.

"Some of us are not earning anymore," Liwanag said.

From P87, dump trucks are now charged P439 from this city to the Balintawak, Quezon City exit of the NLEx. The new rates became effective last Feb. 10.

Prices of gasoline have gone up thrice since January. A trip from Porac, Pampanga to Pasig City consumes an average of 90 liters of gasoline, Liwanag said.

Some 3,000 truckloads of sand are hauled from the province daily.

He said there are other costs weighing on the quarry industry.

Haulers pay P300 in sand tax to the provincial capitol, between P50 and P90 in municipal sand tax, and P25-P50 in "pass way" fees to barangays.

Antonio Buyson, a quarry operator, said a single trip nets an income of only P40 after payment of wages of drivers and helpers and the cost of sand, the price of which varies depending on quality.

Liwanag said PTA members have not used the Manila North Road, more known as the MacArthur Highway, because traffic there was heavy and the road conditions were bad. He said PTA members, as frequent road users of the NLEx, should be entitled to at least a 20-percent discount on toll fees.

In the consultation, quarry operator Elvira Sumadchat said Bureau of Internal Revenue collectors have started meeting with her and other traders on the collection of excise tax.

At least 40 percent of the proceeds of the tax would go to the local governments.

Industry leaders said many were still persisting with the trade even with the diminishing income. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

# New ₱101-M port seen boosting trade in Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—The completion of a new commercial port in Barangay Pantao in Libon, in June, is expected to spur trade in the region with the arrival of more cargo and passengers.

The port was also seen boosting ecotourism in the region, especially in the third district of Albay which covers Libon, Polangui, Oas, Ligao, Guinobatan and Camalig.

Rene Agao, acting manager of the Port Management Office here of the Philippine Ports Authority, projected that once the port is completed by June, initial cargo volume in Pantao would reach 111,057 metric tons (MT), with 64,314 MT inbound and at about 46,743 MT outbound.

In succeeding years, the volume is projected to hit 300,000 MT.

There are currently eight major ports in Bicol—Matnog and Bulan ports in Sorsogon, Jose Panganiban Port in Camarines Norte, San Andres Port in Catandunes, Masbate Port in Masbate, Pasacao Port in Camarines Sur, and the Legazpi City and Tabaco City ports in Albay.

He added that with the completion of Pantao Port, they expect an escalating inter-island and domestic cargo traffic and an increasing average importation record.

"(This) could mean competition since domestic cargo traffic can be diverted from Legazpi and Tabaco ports to Pantao. Or private (foreign) firms could be encouraged to use the new port," Agao said.

Last year, there was a two-percent fall in the volume of international total cargo traffic in Bicol based on metric tonnage, from 3.65 million metric tons to 3.58 MT.

The decline was partly attributed to the series of typhoons that hit the country last year and the lack of export products.

But with the opening of the Pantao Port, Agao said the Bicol region could attract more cargo clients like logistics companies, manufacturing firms producing sea-borne cargoes and agri-business producers.

The P100.8-million port was part of the almost P90-billion budget for major infrastructure development projects in Bicol. *Gil Francis G. Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

# GMA to seek lower power rates for Negros Oriental

DUMAGUETE CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has offered to get the Energy Regulatory Commission to lower electricity rates in Negros Oriental.

Arroyo said in an interaction with the media here last week that she would ask the Department of Energy to petition the ERC to lower rates in the province.

She added that local electric cooperatives should support the petition once the DOE files it with the ERC.

The President offered the solution to appease Oriental Negrenses, who have been complaining of high electric rates despite being a source of cheap geothermal energy.

Local residents decry the fact that Dumaguete pays more for electricity than consumers in Bacolod and Cebu, who benefit from the geothermal energy from Palinpinon, Negros Oriental.

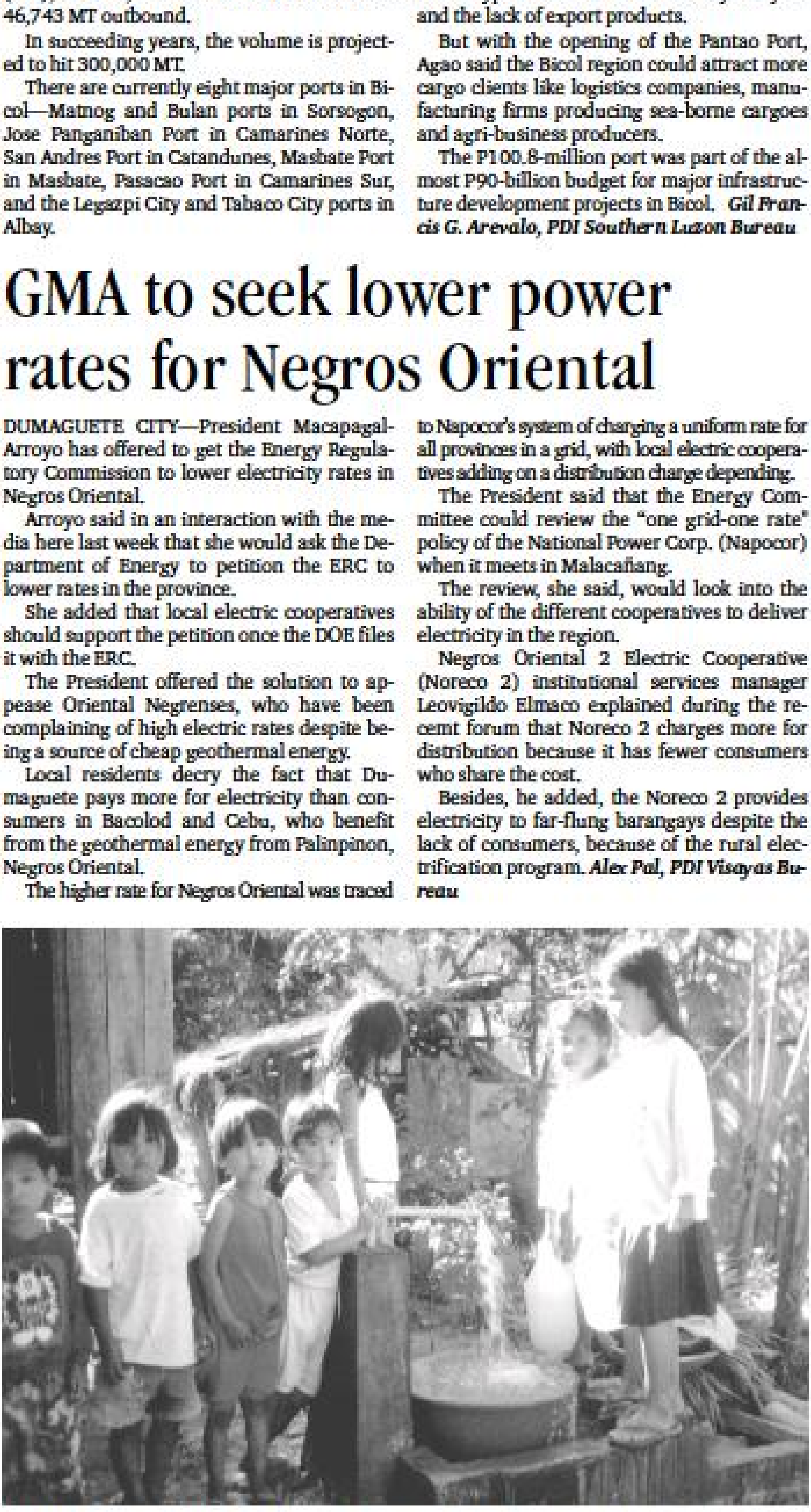
The higher rate for Negros Oriental was traced to Napocor's system of charging a uniform rate for all provinces in a grid, with local electric cooperatives adding on a distribution charge depending.

The President said that the Energy Committee could review the "one grid-one rate" policy of the National Power Corp. (Napocor) when it meets in Malacañang.

The review, she said, would look into the ability of the different cooperatives to deliver electricity in the region.

Negros Oriental 2 Electric Cooperative (Noreco 2) institutional services manager Leovigildo Elmaco explained during the recent forum that Noreco 2 charges more for distribution because it has fewer consumers who share the cost.

Besides, he added, the Noreco 2 provides electricity to far-flung barangays despite the lack of consumers, because of the rural electrification program. *Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*



**POTABLE** water for a remote barangay. These children in Barangay Chua, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat, used to hike for kilometers just to get water for their household use. Now, with the installation of a potable water system, made possible through a grant by the Japanese Embassy, under its Grant assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GAGP), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Alliance for Mindanao Off-grid Renewable Energy (Amore), they just go to any one of the 18 tap stands located across six sitios and they can easily get water. Amore is being implemented in at least 160 remote communities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Western and Central Mindanao in partnership with the Dept. of Energy, ARMM and Mirant Philippines.

# Tourism program seen raising $5B in investments

# Bookstore chain plans to go public

## Forum for entrepreneurs

## T-bill rates . . .

# A wholly weak market

MR. BEARBULL



# Court stops SEC from enforcing order on Cemco tender offer



## Gov't share in Malampaya revenue to remain intact

## Mining sector sees $555M . . .

## DISCLOSURES

# LIFESTYLE

Editor: Chelo Banal-Formoso





MODERN interiors make a visit to the Institute a pleasant experience.

Institut Santre's approach to looking and feeling good is holistic



CLEAN and contemporary decor.



THE lounge, with its padded leather chairs and adequate reading materials, is a posh waiting area.

# For-men-only weight-loss program

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Rudy Esperas

GOING to the gym regularly may be an effective way to lose excess pounds and build muscles, but for men with problems in their metabolism additional intervention may be necessary.

[illegible]

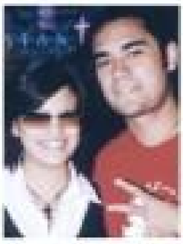
## Exclusively for men

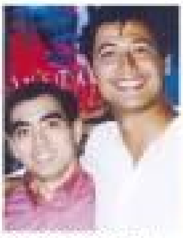
[illegible]

## Customized

[illegible]






# A jump-from-your-seat experience



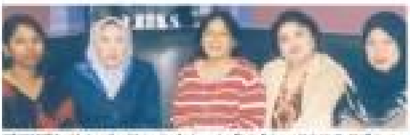



WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

## Family affair




## Fun party

# Bed rest may not relieve lower back pain

## Bed rest not the best

## Keep on moving

# Bed rest may not relieve

**WELL AND GOOD**

*Tina Juan*



A study found medium firm mattresses better than firm mattresses

LOWER back pain can be mysterious. In majority of cases, the causes are unknown.

Sometimes, the physical evidence does not match the presence or absence of pain. Some people have chronic back pain but do not have any sign of internal damage while others who have never had back pain discover that they have a bulging vertebral disk or some other structural problem that should be causing them pain.

Some people with very tight hamstrings (believed to be a common cause of back pain) have perfectly normal lower backs while others who have flexible hamstrings have back problems.

One thing for sure, lower back pain is a common experience for many people. Someone even said it was the price humans paid for walking on two legs.

Here is a small compilation of the latest research on the prevention and treatment of lower back pain. It is not a substitute for professional advice but simply information that lower back pain sufferers may find interesting.

Always consult your doctor for appropriate treatment and therapy for your specific type of lower back problem.

## Muscle coordination

Strengthening the abdominal and back muscles has long been a rule in the treatment of lower back pain. But experts do not agree on what strengthening exercises are best. Some believe exercises can put a great amount of pressure on the spinal disks.

Danish researchers discovered that smooth coordination of the back muscles is just as important as having strong and flexible muscles. In their three-month study of 40 people ages 18-65 with chronic back pain, those who did special exercises that did not strengthen the back but developed better coordination of the trunk muscles had just as good results in terms of less back pain and better back mobility as the group that did the traditional back strengthening exercises.

If you want to know how to do coordination exercises, check out the article by Owen Anderson in Sports Injury Bulletin in http://www.sportsinjurybulletin.com/archive/0033-lower-back-pain.htm.

## Medium firm mattress

A 2003 study published in The Lancet found that medium firm mattresses were better at relieving lower back pain while lying in bed and upon rising than firm mattresses. This is contrary to the common belief that firm, hard mattresses are best. (Spring mattresses were used in the three-month study so results could be different for other types of mattresses).

On a scale of one-10, with 10 being the softest, medium firm mattresses were rated five-six while firm mattresses were rated two-three. Neither participants nor researchers knew who got which type of mattress.

In a review of the study, Dr. Richard Glickman-Simon wrote, "Since you spend about one-third of your life lying down on a mattress, it makes sense that the type of mattress you have could affect your lower back."

## Forgiveness and depression

It has been documented that chronic pain can lead to depression but a 2003 University of Alberta study found that the opposite could also be true. Researchers discovered that people with depression were four times as likely to develop severe neck and lower back pain than people who were not depressed.

Meanwhile, a 2004 Duke University study found that among chronic back pain sufferers, those who had issues with unforgiveness had higher levels of pain and had more anger and depression than people who were more forgiving.

## Back botox

The average person associates botox or botulinum toxin injections with wrinkles but botox has long been used to control muscle overactivity. It has also been found effective in easing migraines and keeping dry excessively sweaty armpits and hands.

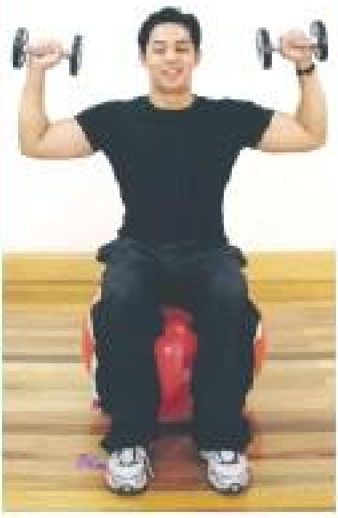
According to a study presented at the 2000 Meeting of the American Academy of Neurology, botox injections may also help relieve chronic mechanical lower back pain. Neither doctors nor patients involved in the study knew who was getting the fake or real injections.

At three weeks, 11 of the 14 patients experienced 50 percent pain relief compared to only four of the 14 patients who did not

BED REST/ C2

## EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

# *Overhead dumbbell press on stability ball*



STRENGTHENS the front of the shoulders and the upper back while challenging the "core" muscles

**Equipment:**

Dumbbells and a stability ball This exercise can also be done seated on a chair or bench.

**Exercise:**

1. Sit on a stability ball with both feet flat on the floor.
2. Raise the dumbbells to the sides of your shoulders with the palms facing front.
3. Take a breath, hold it and keep your abdominals tight then smoothly lift the dumbbells overhead till your arms are straight, with the elbows just slightly bent. Exhale as soon as you pass the hardest part of the lift. (Holding your breath for just a split-second as you start the lift gives support to your spine).
4. Slowly lower the dumbbells to the starting position.



**Performance tips:**

1. Your arms are straight in the overhead position but be sure that you are not locking your elbow joint.
2. Do not allow the dumbbells to drift forward or backward in the overhead position.
3. In the uppermost position, your elbows should be next to your ears, not in front of them.
4. Keep your abdominals tight and do not allow your lower back to arch to lift the dumbbells up.
5. If you have chronic shoulder joint or lower back problems, avoid this exercise.

**Repetitions:**

12-15 repetitions

# Do our beliefs about physical reality need revision?

MANY strange phenomena are happening in all parts of the world. [illegible]

**Downplayed**

[illegible]

INNER AWARENESS



Jaime T. Licauco

[illegible]

# For-men-only weight-loss program

[illegible]

**Baseline data**

[illegible]

**Different approach**

[illegible]